

Stage 3 Select Sources / Investigation

Now, it's time to take the action of finding out information in order to respond to an inquiry question. Using your inquiry question, you will:

- gather all the information you can from a variety of sources
- evaluate the sources: work out which information is really useful as well as reliable and which isn't for a response to the inquiry question

What sources do I use for my investigation?

You have access to a variety of information sources:

- your prior knowledge
- subject area content
- significant/expert people
- survey data
- Published media (books, internet articles from magazines, journals, newspapers etc.)
- internet resources
- video or audio recordings
- images
- Web sites

You should use them all, initially, to find out as much as you can on your topic.

Record all of the sources you read, view, listen to, interview in your process journal. This will form a valuable resource for later in the project process.

BOOKS I'VE READ ON MY TOPIC

Record your books in the order – author surname, first name initial, (year of publication), Title of book in italics, publisher, city where published, country where published

For example:

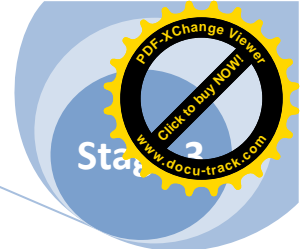
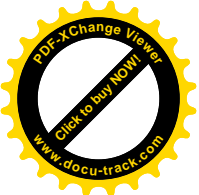
Hutton, E (2005), *Clever Thinking in Court Design*, Black Books, Adelaide, Australia

MAGAZINE ARTICLES I'VE READ ON MY TOPIC

Record your magazine articles in the order – author surname, first name initial, (year of publication), Title of article in quotation marks, Title of magazine in italics, Issue or volume number, pages, publisher, city where published, country where published

For example:

Lao, K T (2005), "The Best Photographic Memories", *Black and White* magazine, May 2006 Issue, pp47-49, Singapore, Singapore



WEB SITES VIEWED ON MY TOPIC

Record your web site visits in the order – author surname, first name initial, (date of latest update or copyright date), Title of web page in italics, date that you viewed the web site, URL address for the web site

For example:

Heinrich, J (updated July 2008), *Cloning the Future*, viewed September 15 2008,
<http://www.futureconcepts.org>

If you cannot find the web page author, you record the web site visit in the order – Title of web page in italics, date it was last updated or copyrighted, date that you viewed the web site, URL address for the web site

For example:

Finding Family, (copyright 2007), viewed October 6 2008, <http://www.findingfamily.uk>

PEOPLE I INTERVIEWED IN REGARD TO MY TOPIC

Record interviews and significant discussions with people in the order – person's surname, first name initial, person's expert role, date of interview

For example:

Ramonovic, S: Boat builder, interviewed March 15 2007

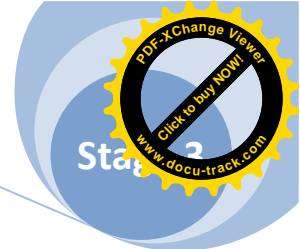
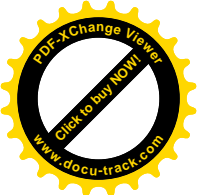
How do I choose what information to use?

Having investigated your topic by reading, viewing, listening and interviewing to gather information, now you have to sort through what you have gathered to choose what is most useful or appropriate for your project response.

There are many techniques you can apply to choose which information to use and which to leave out. Some examples are identified below as guides or reminders of what to do at this point. Sometimes one technique will work. More likely you will have to use combinations of them to finally choose what information to use.

Straight logic

This technique requires you to simply select information by thinking about its relevance to your inquiry question. You label pieces of information as either 'Relevant' or 'Irrelevant' and then use the 'Relevant' information for your project.



Degree of importance

You make four categories and go through your information labelling each piece of information according to the category that best describes what you have found. The categories are:

Absolutely essential

You cannot respond to the inquiry question if you don't use this information. Keep it and use it.

Very useful

This is information that should be used in the response because it makes very clear to everyone what you have learned or want other people to learn about your topic. Keep and use as much of this as you can.

Interesting

This information does refer to the inquiry question, but if you did leave it out it wouldn't radically change your response. Use it if you don't have enough of the two levels above.

Irrelevant

When you look at your inquiry question this information doesn't really help. It is related to the topic only, but not the area of interaction. You ignore this information.

The Checklist

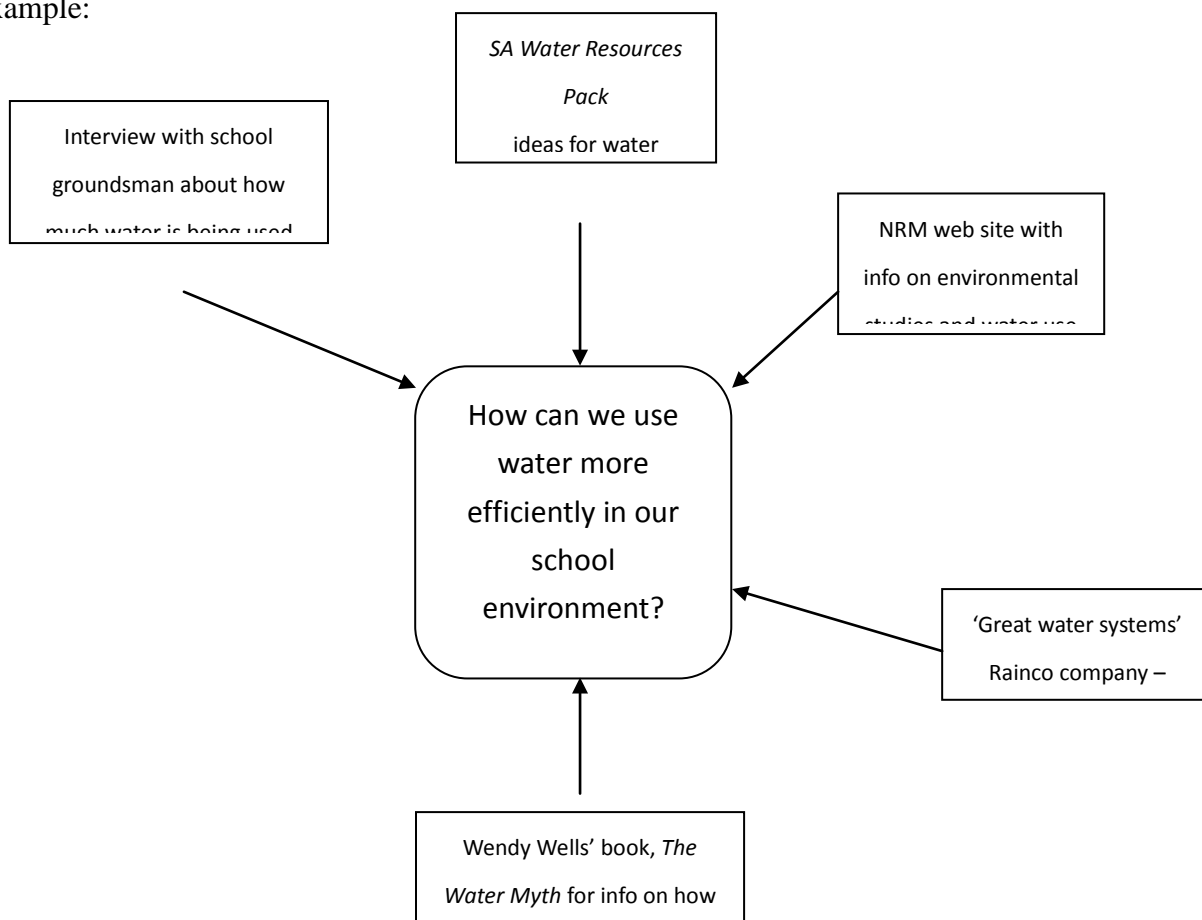
For this technique you have a series of question that you apply to each piece of information. If it receives ticks against all questions then clearly you should use the information in your response.

- Is the information source reliable and is the information accurate?
- Is the information current or still valuable if it is older?
- Does the information help me respond to the inquiry question?
- Does the information connect clearly with the area of interaction or aspects of it?
- Does the information belong to my topic?
- Will the information help me to develop my project product?

Mind-mapping

For this technique, you draw the information that you believe will help you to respond to your inquiry question around the inquiry question. This way you can 'see' how your information fits together or interconnects.

Example:



Using Reliability of sources grid

Criteria	Rating	Descriptor
A Author	4	Written by a well-known reputable organization. Many professionals contributed to creating this source.
	3	Author is highly professional in this field of study. Author is from or backed by a well-trusted organization.
	2	Author is knowledgeable/reputable, bases the source on his/her own experiences as well as others'.
	1	Author is stated but is unreliable. Source is eliminated.
	0	Does not meet any of the above. Source is immediately eliminated.

B Origin	3	Published in professional/well-known/reputable media
	2	Published in trustworthy media
	1	Posted in a well-known or editable media where anybody can post. Source is almost always eliminated.
	0	Does not meet any of the above. Source is immediately eliminated.
C Objectivity	3	Non-biased with appropriate reasoning and opinions for both pros and cons.
	2	Mostly biased but basing the opinion on a wide variety of reasons.
	1	Completely biased with a narrow scope of points.
	0	Confusing/unclear objectivity. Source is immediately eliminated.
D Quality	3	Highly professional, convincing source.
	2	Convincing details with understandable reasoning.
	1	Somewhat relevant to the subject. Not reasonable enough to qualify as a convincing source.
	0	Irrelevant information presented. Source is eliminated.
E Quantity	2	Appropriate amount of information to clearly state the opinion and facts with detailed reasoning.
	1	Too much or too little.
Total	13-15	Excellent source
	11-12	Good source
	8-10	Acceptable source
	5-7	Average source on the internet, usually eliminated
	Below 5	Source is immediately eliminated

The important thing is that you do consciously sort through your information until you are satisfied you have collected everything that you think you need to make a response to the inquiry question. Then you begin a new process in the Personal Project.